

National Automated Reference Library Kemeny Proposal

Use of computers to ease libraries' growing pains was urged by John G. Kemeny in an article "Library of the Future," in a recent issue of the *Dartmouth College Library Bulletin*.

Pointing out that the Dartmouth College library doubled the number of volumes in its collection in the past 30 years, Kemeny, president of Dartmouth, said that doubling again in the next 30 years is something the college could not afford in terms of facilities and staff. His solution: a national automated reference library wherein could be stored the huge volume of specialized, infrequently used books that currently clog library shelf space.

By photographically reducing these volumes through the ultra-microfiche process and storing the images on a tape similar to magnetic tape, a method of management storage and easy retrieval can be achieved, Kemeny said.

A scholar at a participating library could, through a time-sharing computer system, have the subject in which he is interested searched and the relevant articles or books transmitted to him and photocopied if desired in a matter of minutes by modern circuitry.

Kemeny admits that the original establishment of such a system would be costly and could be borne only by the federal government. However, he points out that long run savings in printing costs, physical plant and staff would more than offset the initial costs.

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